



STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY: WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

President Bush - Social Security Must Be Strengthened For Those Who Need It Most: "More than one in five Americans rely on Social Security for nearly all their retirement income. Think about that. So I proposed a Social Security system in the future where benefits for workers with the lowest incomes will grow faster than the benefits for people who are better off. Economists call this idea progressive indexing. It means that in the future all workers will get Social Security checks bigger than the ones they receive today, but that the benefits will rise at a rate we can better afford." (President George W. Bush, Remarks to the National Association of Realtors, 5/13/05) [Read A Transcript Of The President's Remarks.](#)

Treasury Secretary John Snow – Bring Ideas To The Table: "I challenge all of our critics to say, if you think you've got a better idea, what is it?" - John Snow, Secretary of the Treasury, in Hartford stumping for the president's plan to change the Social Security system." (The Quote, *The Hartford Courant*, 5/10/05) [Link To The Quote.](#)

SBA Administrator Hector Barreto – Self-Employed Have Fewer Options To Save And Need Personal Accounts: "The importance of personal accounts is amplified by the limited retirement savings options for the self-employed. The current double payroll tax puts small business retirement plans out of reach for many. But voluntary personal accounts make retirement assets a real possibility for those who would otherwise rely heavily on Social Security. And through personal ownership, the accounts ensure that your money cannot be spent on other government programs instead of on your retirement." (Hector V. Barreto, Op-Ed, *San Gabriel Valley (CA) Tribune*, 5/8/05) [Read The Editorial.](#)

Editorial – Progressive Benefit Growth Keeps Social Security Solvent And Dependable: "The Bush proposal would have benefits continue to grow for everyone, but they would expand more slowly for top earners than for those in the lower third. Workers in the middle would see a mix. The difference would be in the index used to increase benefits. Payments currently are keyed to wage growth, which is faster than the rise in prices. Mr. Bush would keep the wage index for the lower-income ranks, then phase in price-indexing for others. ... Given Social Security's dire fiscal outlook, there have to be compromises. But they don't have to abridge Social Security's purpose of assuring a dependable income foundation for retired workers. A scaled benefit system -- progressive indexing, as it is called -- would meet that original-intention test while going a long way toward keeping Social Security solvent." (Editorial, "A Helpful Turn On Social Security," *Grand Rapids [Mich.] Press*, 5/8/05) [Read The Editorial.](#)

Younger Workers Seek Solutions For Problems That Will Affect Their Generation: "The debate about fixing Social Security came to the campus of Mount St. Joseph High School last week. It was an Advance Placement course and invitation from a high school senior which summoned Jo Anne Barnhart, the top executive at the Social Security Administration. Barnhart told students that by the time they reach her age, Social Security will be in serious trouble. ... She said that in 2041, the Social Security Administration will only be able to pay 74 percent of benefits. ... When the bell rang for the next class session, students were still trying to come up with a solution to fix the 70-year-old program. 'The more you learn, the more you realize the solutions aren't simple,' Barnhart said." (Michele D. Manigault, "Social Security On MSJ' Class Agenda," *Catonsville (MD) Times*, 5/11/05) [Read The Whole Story.](#)

Allan B. Hubbard – President's Plan Beneficial To Low-Income Workers: "Absent reform, Social Security benefits for low-income Americans will be cut by more than one-quarter in 2041, with those cuts growing deeper each year after that. For low-wage workers, these massive benefit cuts would be devastating. Social Security makes up nearly all the retirement income for the lowest-earning Americans. Failing to address Social Security's insolvency would literally double the number of seniors living in poverty in 2041. That is simply unacceptable to President Bush and should be unacceptable to other elected leaders in Washington. The president's plan strengthens the safety net by guaranteeing that when today's low-wage workers retire after a lifetime of paying into Social Security, their monthly benefit keeps them out of poverty. For low-wage workers just entering the workforce, his plan would ensure

their Social Security checks are more than 40% higher than the checks of similar workers retiring today." (Allan B. Hubbard, "Save Low-Income Workers From Retiring Into Poverty," *The Detroit Free Press*, 5/13/05) [Read The Op-Ed.](#)

Editorial – Bush's Plan Reasonable: "Some Americans don't seem to quite grasp that they are faced with a very stark choice: Accept the status quo and have draconian reforms imposed on them when Social Security starts going bust in 2017, or make reasonable choices now to keep the system afloat and provide for the next generation of workers. We think Bush's plan does the latter." (Editorial, "Waiting For The Tooth Fairy," *Investor's Business Daily*, 5/11/05) [Read The Editorial.](#)

Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA) – Must Find Solutions: "The last time Congress had to take up Social Security reform, Members thought it would be fixed for at least 75 years. Unfortunately, Social Security is facing insolvency again unless Congress acts soon. In just three years, the first "baby-boomers" begin to retire and the Social Security surplus will shrink rapidly. In just more than a decade, Social Security will begin to spend more money than it is taking in. You don't have to travel too far outside of the Beltway to understand how worried older Americans are that their children and grandchildren may not receive the benefits of Social Security that they currently receive. Most Americans realize that we need to find solutions to this problem now, to ensure that Social Security can deliver peace of mind for future generations the way it has for the past 70 years." (Rep. Jack Kingston, "On Social Security, Democrats Offer 'No Deal,' Not New Deal," *Roll Call*, 5/11/05) [Read The Op-Ed.](#)

Editorial – President's Plan A 'Serious Start At Compromise': "To his credit President Bush last week crossed a relatively huge political divide by endorsing Social Security benefits indexing. ... Bush deserves credit for moving this important debate along; for embracing a policy at odds with traditional Republican ideas, interests and values; for finally coming to the table with a proposal ... his announcement is a serious start at compromise, which is what it is going to take to fix Social Security in the long term." (Editorial, "Dems Must Respond To Bush On Benefits," *The Albuquerque Tribune*, 5/10/05) [Read The Op-Ed.](#)

Assistant Treasury Secretary Mark Warshawsky - Progressive Indexing Is A Better Deal: "Under the President's plan, future seniors would receive benefits that are at least as high as today's seniors. The lowest-income Americans would see the fastest growth, while medium-wage workers would also receive higher benefits, even after adjusting for inflation, than the system currently pays out. For the highest-earning seniors, benefits would grow no faster than inflation. A progressive indexing approach, such as Robert Pozen's, would give a low-income 20-year-old who retires in 2050 annual benefits of \$12,900, or \$3,500 more than the current system can pay. A middle-income 20-year-old would get \$17,300 under Mr. Pozen's approach, or \$1,800 more than the current system can pay. Plus, if younger workers are allowed the option of putting a portion of their payroll taxes into a voluntary personal account, those workers could earn a nest egg and the opportunity to receive a higher rate of return than the current Social Security system can provide." (Mark J. Warshawsky, Letter To The Editor, *The Toledo Blade*, 5/13/05) [Read The Letter.](#)

Treasurer Anna Cabral – Not Addressing Social Security Problems Is Irresponsible: "UC Davis alumna and U.S. Treasurer Anna Escobedo Cabral spent Thursday on campus visiting with students and faculty and promoting President Bush's plan to change the Social Security system. Saying the government's retirement system faces a 'day of reckoning' as early as 2017, Cabral argued that not addressing Social Security's long-term budget issues would be irresponsible to future generations. She noted that the system will have a projected 72 million beneficiaries when the baby-boomer generation is fully retired, compared to approximately 40 million currently. 'Social Security was never intended to be the sole source of retirement income,' she said in a press conference with local media. 'We have to figure out a way to fix it once and for all.'" (Christian Danielson, "Treasurer Pushes Bush's Social Security Plan," *The California Aggie*, 5/13/05) [Read The Article.](#)

Social Security Administrator Jo Anne Barnhart – Bipartisanship Can Be Achieved: "If you don't do something, the effect (for the people on Social Security after 2041) is just as if your boss walked in and said, 'I'm cutting your salary 26 percent,' she said. Ms. Barnhart said she is sure that Democrats and Republicans can work together to find a solution. 'I really believe it's talking and having discussions like this that makes me really confident about the future,' she said. 'We are a nation with a proud history of grappling with really difficult issues. We do it best when we work in a bipartisan way.'" (George P. Matysek Jr., "Social Security Chief Visits Mount St. Joseph," *Catholic Review*, 5/13/05) [Read The Article.](#)